



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SUMMIT: APRIL 23-24, 2019
Technical Assistance Partner Profile

BACKGROUND:

Organization name: **Focused Schools**, a limited liability company (LLC), is a preeminent educational development and service organization with more than 30 employees located nationwide and internationally.

Organization address: Focused Schools' headquarters are located at 1517 North Point Street, #341 San Francisco, CA 94123.

Organization contact person, contact email, and phone number: Kerry Purcell, Senior Executive, can be reached via email (kpurcell@focusedschools.com) or by phone at (844) 957-2466 or (217) 341-8719.

Organization mission: The mission of **Focused Schools** is to form collaborative partnerships with schools and districts throughout North America to help them become student-focused, well-managed, cost-effective, and results-driven.

APPROACH: Describe your organization's school improvement services

The Focused Schools' approach to supporting school improvement is remarkably ***straightforward, focused and achievable***. We work with school leaders (principal, coach and the instructional leadership team [ILT]) to fully implement our Focused Framework. This Framework assists school leaders in successfully identifying a set of strategic priorities and then turning those priorities into a robust plan with goals, tasks, timelines, and benchmark evaluations. The implementation of the Focused Framework builds principal and teacher leadership and internal capacity. It helps leaders focus on systems and improved instruction.

1. Identify and Implement a schoolwide instructional focus.
2. Develop professional collaboration teams to improve teaching and learning.
3. Identify, learn and use effective evidence-based practices to meet the needs of each student.
4. Create a targeted professional development plan that builds expertise in selected evidence-based practices.
5. Realign resources (people, time, talent, energy and money) to support the instructional focus.
6. Engage families and the community in supporting the instructional focus.
7. Create an internal accountability system growing out of student learning goals that promote measurable gains in learning for every student.

Following each professional development session, we provide onsite and distance coaching to ensure that what gets put on paper gets done. Our approach to coaching is built around a strategic system of pressure and support as we help leaders and their teams to develop and implement their focused plan for school improvement. During the coaching session, the leader can expect to give a detailed update on progress and evidence, participate in an implementation walk through, and receive targeted feedback (differentiated based on



school/leader needs) and support focused on turnaround practices. At the conclusion of the coaching session, a detailed action plan will be developed and left at the school. Weekly follow-up will occur to ensure that the action plan is being executed with fidelity.

Describe how your organization differentiates its services to meet the unique needs of districts and schools: Focused Schools conducts a comprehensive needs assessment and asset mapping at the beginning of all partnerships. These findings are intended to provide a formative assessment that leads to suggested recommendations and next steps. These recommendations and next steps assist the Focused Schools team in designing and delivering customized, monthly professional development, targeted executive coaching, and technical assistance and support to district and school leaders.

Describe the attributes of your organization's ideal partner district and/or school: Focused Schools is honored to work with any district and/or school that is striving to work smarter in service of their students. Our work is best received in districts where more than one school is served. While we have done work at "single sites", we find that "multiple site" partnerships foster collaboration and ownership within and across schools. This collaboration and ownership leads to capacity building within the larger system and results that can be replicated across multiples sites. Likewise, full participation and engagement from district leaders is imperative to ensure fidelity of implementation of the framework and leadership expectations.

IMPACT: Describe your organization's track record of dramatically improving schools or systems and/or radically increasing outcomes for targeted subgroups:

Since the organization's inception, Focused Schools maintains an impressive track record of helping schools gain significant growth, often more than 7% points annually on standardized assessments, in student outcomes. This is a hallmark of Focused Schools work and is often the reason Focused Schools is requested to provide technical assistance, professional development and executive coaching in high-needs districts and schools throughout the nation. Selected evidence of impact is indicated below.

- At Downey Unified School District (CA), the English Language Learning Progress Indicator (Grades K-12) has shown steady improvement in the percent of English learners who made progress towards proficiency. English Language Learning Progress Indicator (Grades K-12) shows steady improvement in the percentage of EL who made progress toward English proficiency: **2015 (67.7%), 2016 (70.4%), 2017 (73.9%).**
- In just two years, Norfolk Public Schools (VA) increased the number of accredited schools by 22%. In 2017, 61% of all Norfolk Public Schools received the distinction of being named as **fully accredited** by the Virginia Department of Education.
- In 2016, Covina Valley Unified School District (CA) **increased** English Language Arts at **all grade levels** and district performance in English Language Arts **exceeded** the state and county for all students, socio-economically disadvantaged students and, Hispanic students.
- At Oak Hill Elementary Schools (MO), **100% of all classrooms showed growth** as measured by the STAR Reading Assessment.